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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [MARR](#) [MOPS](#) [EAID](#) [SOCI](#) [PTER](#) [SO](#)  
SUBJECT: SOMALIA - TFG LAUNCHES RENEWED OFFENSIVE IN  
MOGADISHU

REF: NAIROBI 1057

Classified By: Somalia Unit Counselor Bob Patterson. Reasons: 1.4 (b, d).

11. (S/NF) Summary: An optimistic Prime Minister Sharmarke disputed media reports that the TFG was making overtures to any of the warlords as it struggled to expand its influence in Mogadishu. Sharmarke thought al-Shabaab was "stretched thin," and predicted that TFG forces would soon begin another counter-offensive in Mogadishu that would coincide with a TFG offensive in Hiraaan region led by TFG Minister of Security Omar Hashi. (The Mogadishu offensive seemed to gather force June 1, with early reports showing the TFG pushing well into Yaqshiid District, and al-Shabaab fleeing to the Mogadishu livestock market.) Sharmarke pushed for more aggressive rules of engagement for AMISOM, saying that "Somalis are tired of al-Shabaab, which has been brutally murdering civilians, and wants to see its fighters removed in any way possible." The Prime Minister said that the TFG was intent on maximum transparency and that a copy of its budget had just been supplied to UNPOS. Negotiations with Ahlu Sunnah Wal Jama'a had not yet borne fruit, he said. The TFG had asked Price Waterhouse, with UNPOS support, to audit its finances and to provide advice on financial administration. In a June 1 telephone call, President Sharif described ongoing TFG advances in Mogadishu, which he credited to USG financial support. Sharif requested urgent financial support for his government, so that it could press its narrow advantage. The Prime Minister asked that USG financial support be in the form of a second, USD 500 thousand tranche to his government. The President also echoed Prime Minister Sharmarke (reftel) in urging that the USG strike terrorists and their camps in Somalia whenever possible. End summary.

PM's Travel  
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12. (C) TFG Prime Minister Omar Sharmarke arrived in Nairobi the evening of May 31 from the Sahel-Saharan heads of state meeting in Libya. On President Sharif's instruction, he had pressed the Government of Libya on an earlier pledge of USD 2 million. The TFG was increasingly skeptical that the money would be provided. Qadhafi had reportedly invited ARS-Asmara chief Hassan Dahir Aweys to Libya in an effort to broker an agreement with the TFG, but Aweys had refused to attend. Sharmarke described the poorly-attended Summit as "a waste of time." He planned to return to Mogadishu on June 2.

No Warlords  
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13. (C) The Prime Minister denied press reports that the TFG was reaching out to the warlords. Before leaving for Libya,

Sharmarke said he had told Mohammed Dheere that he "must go back to Nairobi," and had even bought his air ticket. (Somalia Unit separately confirmed that Dheere is in Nairobi.) The TFG was negotiating for the handover of Dheere's seven technicals. The TFG Interior Minister, as mistakenly alleged by the media, had not met with warlords Musa Sude, Mohammed Qanyare, and Osman Otto who, in any event, "no longer control anything," Sharmarke said. The TFG was resisting efforts to have its conflict with al-Shabaab become a clan affair. It had recently rejected an offer by the Mudolud (an amalgam of closely-related Hawiye sub-clans, which includes the Abgal, Mobleen, Udejeen, and others) to send up to 2000 troops from Jowhar, Middle Shabelle, for precisely that reason.

#### Equipment Needs

14. (C) Sharmarke again re-hashed the TFG's failure to win significant territory in its May 22 Mogadishu counter-offensive (reftel). His government had inherited inexperienced, undisciplined troops, and remained handicapped by poor communications and logistics. He seconded TFG Force Commander Mohammed Osman "Dhumaal," who told Somalia Unit May 30 that his forces needed Motorola handsets that are compatible with those used by AMISOM, in addition to transport, like trucks and ambulances. AMISOM had supplied two trucks and three ambulances for the May 22 attack, but more was needed. Sharmarke reiterated the TFG's request for APCs as soon as possible.

#### Al-Shabaab Stretched Thin

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15. (C) Sharmarke's assessment of al-Shabaab is that they were "stretched very thin." Al-Shabaab had "nothing in Merca or Kismaayo." Many of its forces had been deployed to the central regions. TFG Minister of Security Omar Hashi was attempting to rally up to 1500 forces in his Hawadle clan base of Hiraan region. He hoped to push toward the al-Shabaab Middle Shabelle capital of Jowhar as the TFG's planned attack in Mogadishu was unfolding in order to prevent al-Shabaab from re-deploying troops to Mogadishu. (As a footnote, the Prime Minister noted that the TFG had advanced to the Sana'a junction in Tribunka (Lower Yaqshid) as of mid-morning, June 1. Subsequent reports on June 1 suggested that the TFG had continued that advance, with the capture of a al-Shabaab-held district police headquarters in Yaqshid, and that al-Shabaab had fled as far as Mogadishu's livestock market.)

#### Transparent Financing

16. (C) Sharmarke said that the TFG was fulfilling its pledge to be as transparent as possible, and to that end it had provided UNPOS with a copy of its 90-day budget. (Somalia Unit will get a copy from UNPOS.) It was also in talks with Price Waterhouse which, with UNPOS's sponsorship, would audit the TFG and offer counseling on financial administration. In the meantime, Sharmarke said, "no money is dispersed unless I approve it." Sharmarke provided Somalia Unit with an accounting of the USD 500 thousand provided by the USG. (Somalia Unit has e-mailed the document to AF/E, and AF/RSA.)

17. (C) Noting that "al-Shabaab is getting paid every month," the Prime Minister urged that the USG provide assistance for June troop payments. He asked that, if possible, a second \$500 thousand tranche be disbursed. The USD 2 million pledged by the Italians was with the AU, he said, and might not be rapidly dispersed to the TFG from there.

#### AMISOM Rules of Engagement

¶8. (C) As he had at last meeting with Somalia Unit (reftel), Sharmarke insisted that it was in the TFG's interest to have more aggressive rules-of-engagement for AMISOM. "Somalis are happy that we're attacking, he said, and added that al-Shabaab's willingness to use the population of Mogadishu as human shields had drained away any legitimacy it might have had. In order to better contest Mogadishu, he again asked that the TFG be supplied with APCs.

ASWJ

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¶9. (C) Negotiations with Ahlu Sunnah Wal Jama'a (ASWJ) had made no headway since Somalia Unit's reftel conversation with the PM. While believing that ASWJ was "not that powerful, yet," Sharmarke worried that the TFG was in danger of being outflanked as it pursued an alliance with ASWJ. ASWJ was pressuring the TFG to provide financial assistance to it, but that money would be used by ASWJ to capture territory in central Somalia that would strengthen its hand in negotiations with the TFG. Sharmarke predicted that there would soon be an al-Shabaab - ASWJ fight over the town of Wabha, roughly between El Bur and Maxaas in Hiran region. An al-Shabaab victory would allow it to move to Dhusamarebb, while an ASWJ triumph would open the door to Bullo Burti.

¶10. (C) The TFG was negotiating with ASWJ's central region elder Sheikh Mohamed, but had made no progress to date. Sharmarke noted that former TFG Deputy Prime Minister Ahmed Abdisalaam Aden was also engaged with Sheikh Mohamed for influence with ASWJ. Abdisalaam seemed to be sponsored by the GoE, Sharmarke noted, adding another difficulty to forging a coalition with ASWJ.

Conversation with Sheikh Sharif

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¶11. (C) In a June 1 telephone conversation, TFG President Sheikh Sharif described to the Ambassador progress TFG forces were making in fighting that day in Mogadishu. According to Sharif, and other observers contacted by Somalia Unit, as of early afternoon June 1, TFG forces had taken control of Yaqshiid district police headquarters and had caused al-Shabaab to retreat to the livestock market. Sharif

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credited USG support for the TFG's advances, and alleged that TFG forces had made discrete progress at three unnamed locales in Middle Shabelle. (Somalia Unit has, to date, been unable to determine what progress in Middle Shabelle President Sharif was referring to. There appear to be TFG preparations for battle under way near Mahadday, about 22 kilometers from Jowhar, however.) He asked for immediate USG financial support to the TFG as it continued its campaign against al-Shabaab.

President Urges Kinetic Strikes

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¶12. (S/NF) Sharif echoed Sharmarke (reftel) in asking the USG to strike terrorists and their training camps in Somalia. He said the TFG had information that Chechens and Bosniaks were "living openly" in Baledogle, and asked that the USG consider a strike.

Comment

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¶13. (C) With the TFG's Mogadishu counter-offensive making good progress as of this writing, both President Sharif and Prime Minister Sharmarke seemed more optimistic, but they believe that international, particularly USG, support is essential to maximizing their narrow advantage. We agree, and urge that rapid delivery of the heavy ammunition and weapons from Entebbe, as well as financial assistance --an additional USD 500 thousand-- be released to the TFG as soon

as possible.  
RANNEBERGER